

'Chasing Movement' 13 - 28 October 2012

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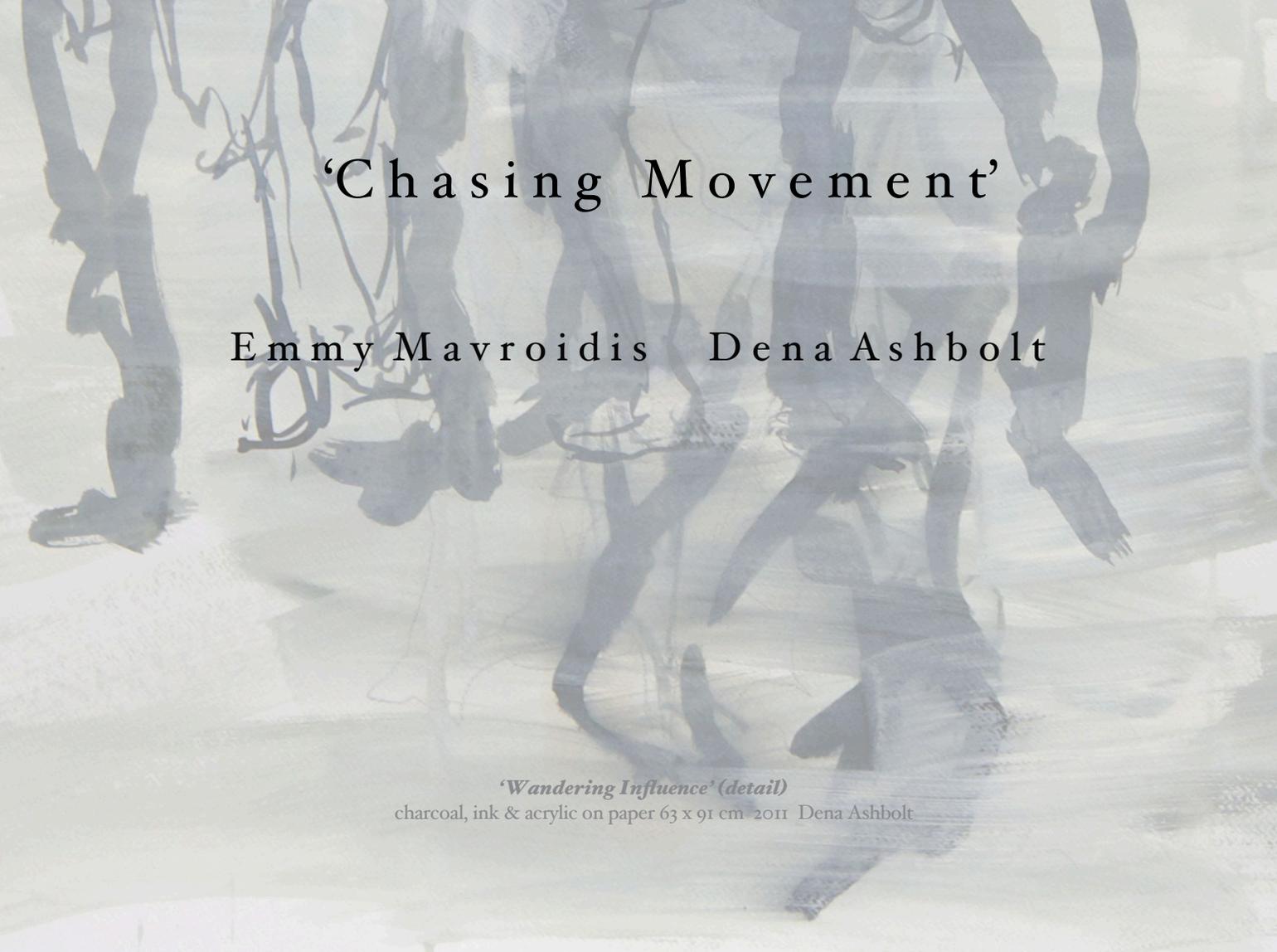
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Chasing Movement

EMMY MAVROIDIS

DENA ASHBOLT



‘Chasing Movement’

Emmy Mavroidis Dena Ashbolt

‘Wandering Influence’ (detail)

charcoal, ink & acrylic on paper 63 x 91 cm 2011 Dena Ashbolt

Aspects of the Figure

Take a piece of burnt stick and something to draw on. Confront a static naked figure and try to make something that suggests simultaneously what that figure has done, is doing, might do.

No nude picnics, no bedrooms or bathrooms, no beach frolics or mythic rape by Minotaur; just a figure in the studio and an urge to find some creative discipline in the experience.

Emmy Mavroidis and Dena Ashbolt have chosen to negotiate this artistic minefield in a spirited and sophisticated fashion with a suite of drawings that engage the idea of movement.

Each approaches the problems with a different emphasis, but for both it's also about weight and volume, rhythm and gesture, skin and bones, the twitch of a pose, a physical presence, imagination...and time.

Of all the familiar artistic rituals, trying to turn naked people into nudes has often seemed the oddest, but it's still routine for art schools.

Abstract artists nurtured in this studio convention a generation ago might have thought it absurd to keep drawing from the figure, but came to realise later that it was even more absurd to stop doing it.

How then to transform an essential art school exercise into a visual resource; how to liberate the still figure from its linear or tonal straightjacket, to make the total space as eloquent and palpable as the solid object; how to animate the forms?

Suggesting movement in a static figure is one of the most interesting and difficult variants on the nude convention. Space and surface can imply such movement without actually describing it.

Mavroidis does it with polished overlappings, intertwined and energetic linear echoes of the poses, alternative renderings of the movement on the same surface.

Ashbolt, more inclined to a broader abstraction of the figure in motion, is looking more towards an essential reduction rather than a proliferation.

Since drawing is an exploration of both self and object, their main differences are those of temperament.

Both know that simply freezing or interrupting an action is not the answer; photographs do that best. It is possible to go further.

There are great examples, of course.

Bonnard's naked wife, shifting gently under and over each ripple of the bathwater, becomes a poetic vision, a nude with a past, a present and a future.

Rodin's rapid notes about bodies drifting erotically around the studio become the raw material for his massively undulating sculpture.

Picasso's Cubist body fragments are discontinuous, partial and ambiguous, but together they evoke a journey in time around the body while still identifying the model.

Severini showed a way, via the buzzing multiple legs of his little dog; Muybridge another, with his scientific take on the series photograph.

However this problem is approached, the classic distinction between the prosaically naked and the nobility of a nude must involve some special vision: technical, aesthetic or emotional if the necessary transformation is to take place.

Thus Matisse's opulent make-believe harem figures never look as naked as Lucien Freud's uncomfortably detailed flesh, but Matisse wanted symbols of visual luxury and Freud is about the painful particularity of here and now and some carnal history both of a person in particular and people in general.

And Bacon's bleak figures locked in some sexual struggle are ultimately made into nudes by the beauty of the paint and the intensity of expression.

The model is an inexhaustible repository of formal information. After that, whatever the artist's sensibility demands then takes over: perhaps an allegory for the human condition, maybe as a vehicle for some theoretical position, an erotic commentary; any number of flights of fancy, abstract convolutions or desperate physical predicament.

Both artists here overlay the figure with the many reminders of previous or current movement, hint at each momentary occupation of a space by the moving body, and then aim at a composite whole that at once suggests views unseen.

There's creative drive, a confident attack and complexity in both Mavroidis' and Ashbolt's drawing, and perhaps the beginning of an inventive push into more painterly developments.

In these drawings they place themselves within territory occupied by the most illustrious exemplars. It's a tough but rewarding place to be.

Ronald Millar.

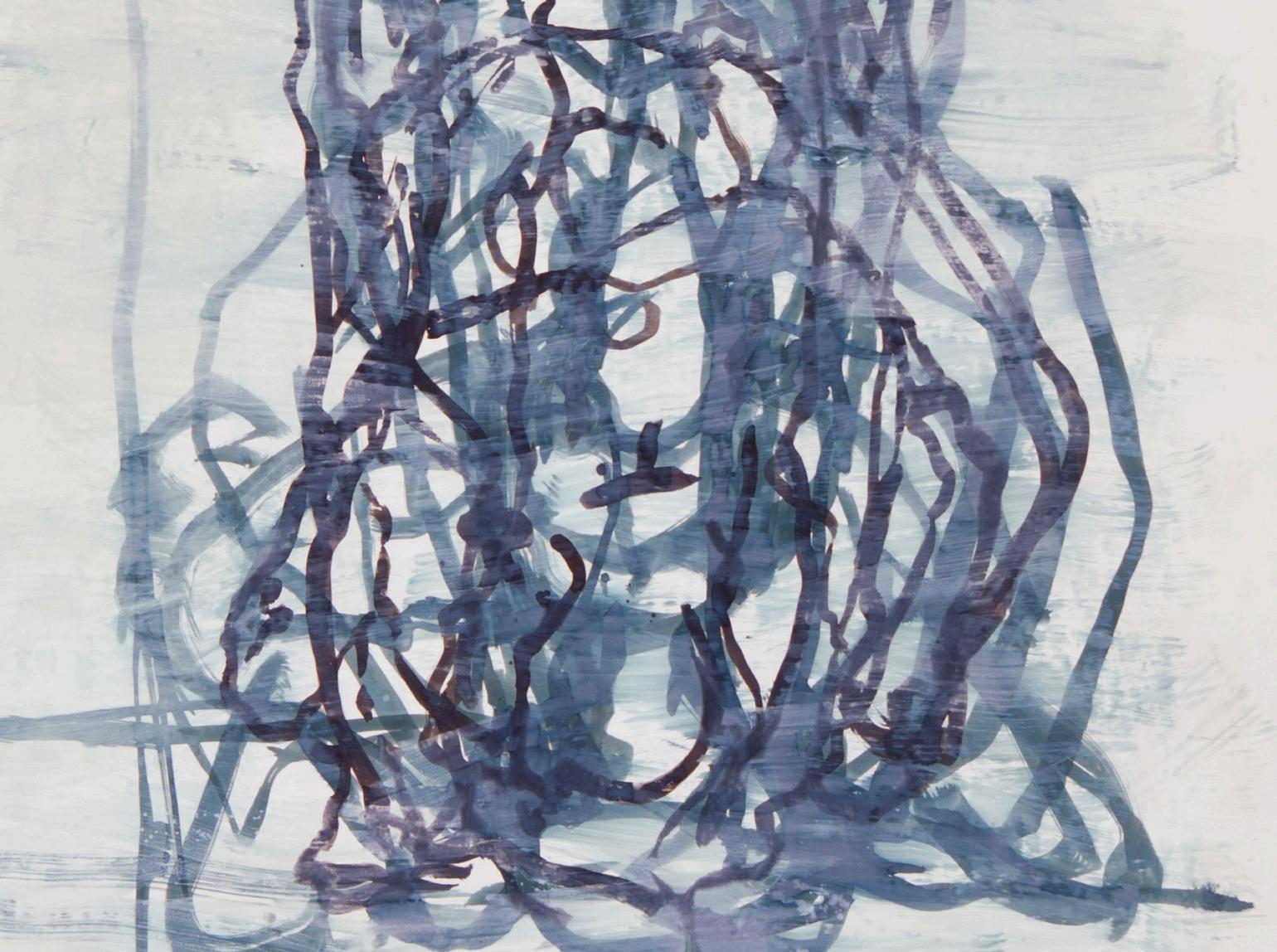
Cover image details:

'To your own beat' charcoal & acrylic on paper 2011,

Emmy Mavroidis

'Silent turn' charcoal & shellac on paper 2011,

Dena Ashbolt





'Turbulent Times' ink & acrylic on Fabriano paper 130 x 230cm 2012, Dena Ashbolt





'Drawn to Movement' charcoal & shellac on Arches 117 x 165 cm 2012, Emmy Mavroidis
Finalist Nillumbik Prize 2012 , Monsalvat Vic



'Movement sketch #3080' charcoal on paper 65 x 50cm 2012 Dena Ashbolt



'Lost Lines' charcoal, shellac, ink & acrylic on paper 65 x 89cm 2011, Dena Ashbolt



'Bend over Backwards' charcoal on Fabriano paper 120 x 190 cm 2011, Emmy Mavroidis



'To Your Own Beat' 1,2,3 charcoal, shellac & acrylic on Fabriano paper 90 x 160cm 2011, Emmy Mavroidis



'Sketch# 09 The Crash' ink, shellac & acrylic on cotton rag paper 30 x 42 cm 2012, Dena Ashbolt



'Sketch #0153 Dancing Figure #7' ink, shellac & acrylic on paper 18 x 26cm 2011, Dena Ashbolt





'Almost Abstract' charcoal & shellac on Arches 90 x 160 cm 2012, Emmy Mavroidis





'Everyday Choices' ink & shellac on paper 70 x 70 cm 2011, Dena Ashbolt





'Blue Wave' mixed media on Fabriano paper 95 x 100 cm 2012, Emmy Mavroidis



Above: **'Family Ties'** ink, shellac & acrylic on paper 70 x 63 cm 2012, Dena Ashbolt
Opposite: **'The Crash'** ink & acrylic on Fabriano paper 150 x 221 cm 2012, Dena Ashbolt
Finalist The Paul Guest Prize 2012, Bendigo Art Gallery



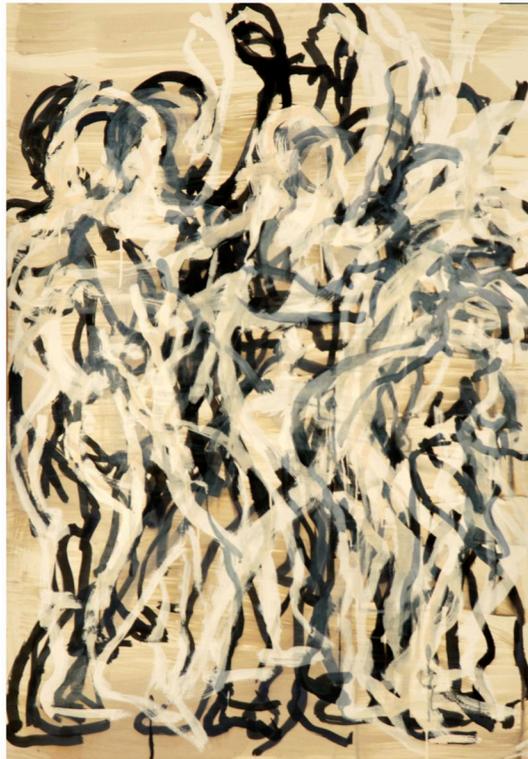


'Play' charcoal on Fabriano paper 120 x 190 cm 2012, Emmy Mavroidis



'Fast Forward' mono print on rice paper 80 x 110 cm 2012, Emmy Mavroidis





Above: *'Regular Intervals'* ink shellac & acrylic on paper 86 x 122cm 2012, Dena Ashbolt
Opposite: *'Body Plays'* ink shellac & acrylic on Fabriano paper 140 x 180 cm 2012, Dena Ashbolt



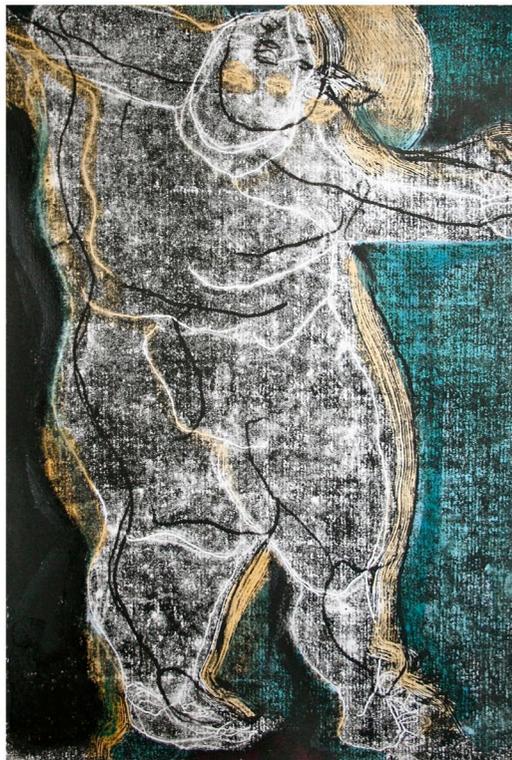
'Rewind' mono print on rice paper 80 x 110 cm 2012, Emmy Mavroidis



'Rewind' charcoal on Fabriano paper 90 x 130 cm 2012, Emmy Mavroidis



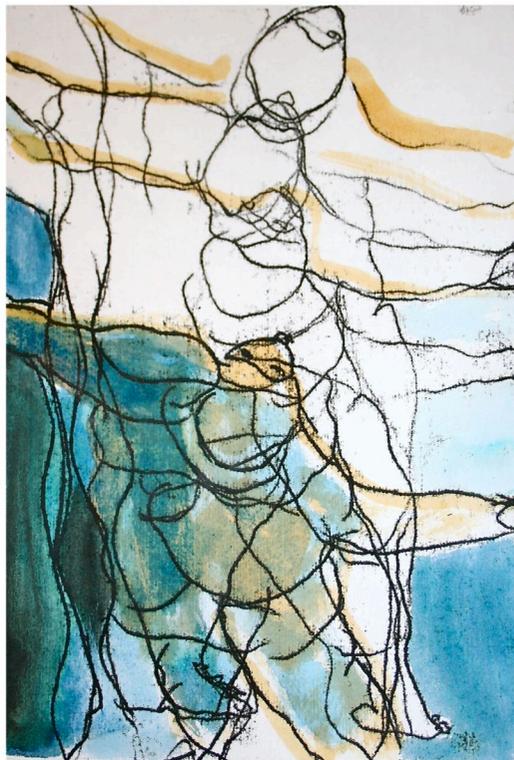
'Pause' monoprint
28 x 40 cm on paper 2011, Emmy Mavroidis



'Bounce' monoprint hand coloured
28 x 40cm on paper 2011, Emmy Mavroidis



'Drop' monoprint hand coloured
28 x 40 cm on paper 2011, Emmy Mavroidis



'Plummet' monoprint hand coloured
28 x 40 cm on paper 2011, Emmy Mavroidis



'Wandering Influence' charcoal, ink & acrylic on paper 63 x 91 cm 2011, Dena Ashbolt